

# Release

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## **Midlands parents: help your child(ren) earn a Junior Forester badge this summer!**

*Harbison State Forest offers an outdoor educational experience with a little learning and a lot of fun*

COLUMBIA—Looking for something fun AND educational to do with your kids on weekdays this summer? Come out to Harbison State Forest to participate in the Forestry Commission's new Junior Forester program.

Families with children ages 5-10 can visit the state forest's Environmental Education Center to check out a backpack loaded with nature investigation supplies, and they'll also receive an age-appropriate activity book containing hands-on learning experiences that the children will complete while hiking in the forest.

"I'm so excited to unveil this program for our families who visit the forest. With the school year ending, this is a great way to get kids outside while continuing their learning over the summer," said Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley. "The self-guided program is designed for families to learn together as they explore the forest."

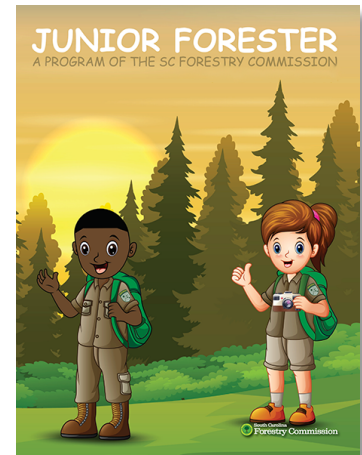
Armed with a clipboard, magnifying lens, binoculars and other tools, children embark on fun activities like a "Cool Critters" scavenger hunt," a seed-collecting mission, a tree ring study and wildlife tracking adventure, among others.

Once the activity guide has been completed, the children bring it back to the Ed Center where they will receive a signed Junior Forester certificate, a wooden Junior Forester badge and a Smokey Bear "schwag bag."

The Junior Forester program is free of charge and available from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are encouraged. Please call Beth Foley at (803) 896-8890 to make a reservation or to ask questions about the program.

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*The mission of the South Carolina Forestry Commission is to protect, promote and enhance South Carolina's forests for the benefit of all.*



Parents can check out backpack materials and activity books for either grades K-2 or for grades 3-5.